I: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1888) 1891
MA11 Kurd MA11

CHAPTER III.

[illegible]

As Moslem beliefs generally will be described in relation to the Osmanli women, I shall not here discuss them, but merely remark that the Kirds have the reputation of being very indifferent followers of the Prophet. It is, indeed, a common saying that "A saint cannot come out of Kirdistan." They are careless and irregular in the performance of their devotions, and not at all inclined to keep the sacred fast of *Ramazan* as conscientiously as do their Osmanli neighbours. They object, for instance, to abstain from smoking between sunrise and sunset, and will indulge in a surpâtch at noonday. "The Prophet did not forbid tobacco," they argue; "how could he forbid a thing he had never heard of? Besides, what is smoke?—nothing, or next to nothing." The Turks do not, however, interfere in their religious affairs. Their mosques are served by imâms of their own race, Kirdish Mollahs expound to them the Moslem law, and their children are taught by Kirdish schoolmasters. But, notwithstanding this fact, the theologians are, as a class, owing to their reputation for rapacity and greed, highly unpopular among their brother Kirds. To the latter they are,

[Page 137]

town'll beg in a taxi, accompanied by two or three 579
heavily-armed bodyguards.

A comparatively large group of men in the town 464
are usually employed as laborers or porters. It has 483
already been noticed that a number work for the govern-
ment on road repair, and others are called for a variety
of situations, for example, by a woman who found herself
short of help. Some are of higher social rank than their
fellows, such as Ameer Saleh, the son of a "respectable"
craftsman, who acted as a foreman over the roadworkers,
and was probably hired not because of skill but because
he commanded the respect of the workers and could thus
effectively transmit the desires of the engineers. Aside
from this, the occupations of laborer and porter are more
or less interchangeable, and a number were in the heavy 482
carrying goods for the merchants and craftsmen. Among 554
the upper class families of Iraq, particularly those of [493]
Ottoman heritage, it is socially forbidden for an educated
man to carry anything of weight in public. Those who
violate this prohibition are held to be either mad or,
more importantly, not real gentlemen. Any government
official who desires anything large moved from one place
to another must have recourse to a servant or porter. In 464
addition to the professionals, adult men, the shopkeepers' 557
youngsters have been mentioned in employment with these 482
tasks, and any visitor of higher social standing to the
town quickly finds himself accompanied by one or more.

also imports, but their fringes must be prepared by local 291
seamstresses. Folded diagonally and rolled, the scarves are bound around the head one over to the other, and one or more of the ends usually hang down to the shoulders. The cap is of white crumbated cloth and decorated with simple patterns in variously coloured thread, sometimes of gilt or silver. The scarves are characteristically an open black and white print, the same as used in the chaffiya or head-cloth of the Arabs to the south, although some are a mild grey or black. The green turban which indicates a descendant of the tribe of the Prophet is worn in the same way, but is infrequently encountered. Only one man in Ravandiz, an elderly blacksmith of humble station, appeared in it regularly. The serpush, the red felt Turkish "fez," 293
is a limited and curious survival in Iraq, among the lower 146
or priests of the Shiite (Muslim) faith and Jewish money-changers. It is never seen in the town. A peculiar type of woolen cap, with a cloth bill in front, a round tassel on top, and a loose hanging which falls over the back of the neck, is found occasionally, affected by chieftains and their bodyguards. It is a peculiarity of a mountain tribal group, the Dzibak. In the Ravandiz district it is taken to indicate a pugnacious or formidable character. It is difficult to decide on its origins. There is an old and 83
extremely widespread prejudice throughout the Islamic world 291
against headgear with brims or bills "because they do not permit the wearer to touch his forehead to the ground in prayer."

of a college or university education and the relative degree of Westernization. The officials and officers are all graduates of colleges or academies, either in Iraq or abroad, where many images of Western civilization are often literally enforced on them by their fellow students. It would be difficult to describe fully the details of this influence, but it may be summed up in what, with certain reservations and qualifications, they consider to be the dress, mannerisms, and thought of a Western gentleman. Thus they wear European clothing, indulge in gaming and drinking (which, one might note, despite Islam, are by no means strangers to the region of the Middle East, save that in this case specifically European forms are encountered), and, in general, try to comport themselves in their work and in masculine society as their models abroad. There are a large number of reservations, a few of which may be enumerated here. The attitude of an Arab official or officer toward his womenfolk, in a formal setting, is, if anything, more strict than that of the local aristocrats. None of the officials would consider appearing before other males naked[1] or "indecently" clothed, and almost all consider European toilet habits filthy in the extreme, water being thought far more hygenic than tissue. A large part of the passion for Westernization stems from a sincere desire, as they envisage it, to better their country, while in others it amounts to pure snobbery. In the latter category, one can often hear officials, speaking

[1] [should read: naked. —Analyst]

s seems likely that this is only permissible after the [605]
ons have been engaged to be married. 584

The relations between husband and wife are highly [593]
variable, depending greatly on the personalities involved. [161]
In masculine theory, a wife should be submissive, obeying
her husband's wishes as though they were commands and ob-
serving the same type of deference exhibited to her father.
The husband is able to punish her, perhaps by beating, as
he might his own child. Reality, however, is otherwise,
for there are wives who fulfill this ideal and others who
do not, and there appears to be little correspondence be-
tween social status in situations in which the wife achieves a
dominant position over her husband. The status of a bride [851]
within the family is greatly strengthened by the birth of
her first son, and she may thereafter command much greater
attention and respect from her husband and relatives by
marriage. She may be tyrannized by her mother-in-law until [604]
this event takes place. Similarly, separations or divorces [586]
are less frequent after the birth of a male heir. The [592]
wife is the mistress of her household and receives money
from the husband for its maintenance. As the recipient
of the dowry and an heir of her parents, she enjoys a
certain amount of potential independence. Beyond these
remarks it is difficult to go further. A number of
marriages were described in which the women quietly assumed
almost dictatorial powers over their husbands and their
households. A daughter of the aristocracy, by virtue of
her father's rank, appears to be much less liable to

prayer on Friday many persons gather in the great mosque, and between the second and third prayers the mala may deliver a short sermon, usually a stereotyped version. The language of both prayer and sermon is Arabic. It is difficult to say to what extent the townspeople are faithful to the requirement of prayer, but an observably large number ignore one or more of the five daily. Women often neglect their prayers entirely. The rosary has been mentioned in the section treating dress, and may be used in devotional exercises of a personal nature, for example, repetitions of prayers or the qualities of God. It is most often used by craggy old hands, however, the mind of the manipulator as matters far divorced from religion.

In addition to prayer, a Muslim is expected to give some part of his yearly earnings as alms. In the early days of Islam these contributions were of two types, zakat, a fixed proportion of the income, and sadaqah, optional gifts. The zakat have been diverted into the government system of taxation, and the townspeople of Ruwanda are thus not held liable, outside of their usual taxes, to enforced charity. Many free collections, sadaqah, however, are made throughout the year, for example, aid for the destitute Arab mentioned in the section treating society, and contributions to these charities are regarded as acts of piety. Another requirement is the duty of pilgrimage to Mecca at least once during the believer's lifetime. In spite of the high cost and the arduous character of the journey, a surprising number of persons in the Ruwandan

gambling, and the eating of pork (we will be certain other "useless" animals) are specifically prohibited in the Quran. The chieftains and commoners, more as a matter of taste than of piety, infrequently break the first two of these commands. The government elite, as has been noticed, finds its chief diversions in them. No one in the three groups, including the several Christians among the officials, ever eats pork. There was a peculiar tale current in the town of a Turkish tribe "somewhere in the mountains" who eat the flesh of swine, but it is probably fabulous, like the beers who carry off women or notes or the numerous accounts of buried treasure. The Westerners, however, hunt the wild boar and eat it. Gambling, as a matter of course, is an everyday affair, but in all the groups of the town it was impossible to find anyone who challenged religion. Some of the better educated officials and teachers, to be sure, exhibited views which might be termed "liberal," but none was a serious unbeliever. There is perhaps a reason for this, the almost religious regard for all written or printed material, as common in the Middle East. A teacher, confronted by the Quran on one hand and an atheist pamphlet on the other, is convinced that in some way both are true, because both are printed, and can either be reconciled or exist, equally valid, side by side.

The Muslim religious calendar is lunar, dated from the flight of the Prophet from Mecca in 622 A.D., and consists of twelve months. Because it is based on the rotation of the moon about the earth, rather than that of the earth

dance at some favored spot, such as the waterfall of Baybal, and there is dancing accompanied by flutes and drums. It might be mentioned that on these days, as well as festival parties, many persons, particularly the girls, stain their hands with henna, just as at a wedding.

The second observance is concerned with the curious figure of Khidir Alyas and takes place in the autumn. "The mulk has nothing to say about Khidir Alyas, nor does he tell the people when the days come. A few people do not recognize these days." Khidir Alyas (arabic, Khidir, "the Green One," and Ilyas, elijah) is a peculiar character of folklore, the belief in whom is singularly widespread in the Middle East. He has been discussed in some detail in a large number of works treating popular religion in the Islamic world, and appears to be a synthesis of such heroes of romance as Gilgamesh, Moses, Elijah, and Alexander the Great.[1] In Upper Egypt there are supposed to be two persons who travel together, Khidir and Ilyas, and in other places only the one. His salient characteristics are his power to confer blessings and his immortality, for he is believed to have drunk from the Fountain of Life. The following narrative was recorded in Ramandus:

> Khidir Alyas is a holy man who lives forever. He walks at night and chases away evil spirits. Whoever experiences misfortune need only cry out to him for aid. One night I was bringing a load of rice to Ramandus by mule. The mule lost his footing and fell. I shouted, "O Khidir Alyas, I have

[1] For example, Tritton, 1951, p. 49.

thanked for you and you should come to my help." 775
Out of the night a man appeared who acted as my 776
difficulty. He helped me get the mule to its
feet and raised the rice. The two of us were walking
along together, talking, and suddenly I discovered
I was alone. Khidir Elyas lived long ago and God
gave him such power to do good that he disappeared.
This is why people ask his help while he is gone.
When Jesus will come again with Ahmad the Mahdi,
Khidir Elyas must be with them, for otherwise they
cannot come.

Persons in Kawandiss who choose to do so fast "for Khidir 785
Elyas" for three days in the fall. Between sunrise and 787
sunset they do not allow themselves food, drink, or tobacco.
Others distribute gifts of food or clothing to the poor. [785]
Kawandiss eats a sweet called Selawat Khidir Elyas [787]
which is exchanged between households at this time. The [931]
exact dates of the observance could not be obtained, save
that it "came just before winter." This interesting [un]
custom does not have the sanction of the mullas and the
priests in the town, and is not followed by all.

With the ingrez and Khidir Elyas observances, the 792
"official" faith of Islam has been left behind, and the
next subject of popular religion which requires consider-
ation is the matter of the sheikh or holy man. Occasionally,
this title is aristocratic and inherited in the male line,
but it is most often accorded to persons who, because of
their piety and the miraculous power they seem to enjoy,
have acquired widespread reputations. Such as these can be
powerful chieftains, noted for their justice, or the most
humble of commoners. They are reputed to have the ability to
effect miracles during their lifetimes, and this power
continues to exist in their graves after death. Many of [794]

could scarcely support itself by ordinary alms. It is interesting that the weak Bektashis, among whom the vendetta and beliefs are just as well marked, are not often accused of being a cover of corruption and criminals. The Bektashi, unlike the Kurd, has been romanticized rather than condemned by those who have had little experience with him. Kurdish life, to be sure, is not distinguished by its intellectual or artistic achievements, but, by the same token, neither is that of medieval Scotland, Sicily, or Albania, mountainous regions inhabited by peoples of a similar temperament. The most interesting characteristic of Kurdish culture is the way in which it has been molded by Islam, and, in this, it exhibits similarities to that of Islamic peoples everywhere. It is quite testimony to the character of Islam and to the force of its protagonists in the Kurdish mountains that the peculiarities which may have obtained in pagan Kurdish society or religion have been so thoroughly submerged into a standard pattern. Aside from minor deviations, one is able to discover little which strikes him as strange or anomalous.

The second object of this study has been the delineation of the impact of the modern state on Kurdish life, and it is necessary to discuss the conclusions reached in this respect in much greater detail than in the first. The Kurds have been subjected, particularly since the Arab conquests, to rulers of one sort or another, the last of whom were the Ottoman Turks, but this control was, for the most part, superficial. Ottoman administration in Kurdistan

Where the use of marriage as sanctioned, "younger" girl is as high and the sanctions for men low down, the inducement for the young man to seek a bride among his cousins is evident. Consequently, the young men under the "right" choice though they appear subjectively as free, and invariably express the opinion, that they are entirely free to seek any bride they might wish. The problem lies in the situation created when the generation of the girl's father is, due to descent lineage has right to a bridegroom which, in the Kandhal System, can advance a senior kinsman. To put somewhat differently, the central problem is what are the advantages gained in this system by giving one's daughter to a brother's son which compensate one for the loss of the bridegroom.

The answer would seem to lie in the political structure. In the Kandhal lineage system, all groups are subject to a constant pressure towards segmentation and fission, counterbalanced by the countervailing system of classification normally sanctioned with exogamous descent systems (among the Thai, territorial vs. descent groups, cross-cutting age-grades, among Tallensi, further the ritual collaboration between lineages, etc.). The pressure is particularly evident in factional activity within the villages, and emerges in all functional descriptions of Kandhal life.[1] Kandhal villages are characterized by a constant struggle for political power on the part of a majority of the adult men, or three main women. Such political power is proportional to the number of villagers one can mobilize to support one's claims. In a patrilineal lineage system, a man can expect political support only from his agnatic relatives, those who by descent belong to his political subsections, and the fundamental division in the village must be the alignments of the younger men of a small lineage segment around an older leader. These segments consist primarily of brothers, sons, and brothers' sons. The relation to the latter is most critical, it crosses the line between political lineages. If a man alienates his nephews by refusing them their traditional rights, he loses their political support. If he, on the other hand, gives them his daughters in marriage, the ties are reinforced and lineage solidarity maintained. The girl's father creates an obligation on the part of his brother's son to give him political support by exempting him from paying the bridewealth. His other nephew's son, in the lineage system, fill the role as political supporters, consequently they must invariably pay bridewealth. The transaction may thus be regarded as constituting a type of delayed exchange: the father receives political allegiance in his lifetime from his brother's son in return for the daughter which he gives him. In this way, the payment of patrimonial [illegible] brother's

[1] See, C. J. Bird, Disputes of a Kandhal in Kandhalese (London, 1954); E. E. Evans, Through Kandhalese and Kandhalese to Kandhal (London, 1956); Hut, op. cit.

daughter marriage serves to reinforce the political obligations of the lineage system.

in its mother's arms or lay than in a cradle. If a child was to be put to sleep it was sometimes during the day laid on a mattress on the floor; if it was put in a cradle it was rocked to sleep. Women in a father's presence could be seen to stretch out the one leg to move the cradle without losing their balance.

Among ... according to the Koran the period of nursing is a full two years. However, it says in the Sura 2, verse 231 that "no one should be charged beyond his capacity ... If they [parents] desire to wean the child by mutual consent and after consultation, it is no sin for them ...". In Southern Kordofan children whose mothers were able to do so were nursed until they reached the age of two. However, many of the women I met were unable to nurse their children themselves. The reason for this was the lack of protein energy in the sorghum diet, of which millet was the main constituent. Milk powder was sold in the city. It was bought and used, but with great caution, as it was not mixed with sufficient care, and adequate hygienic measures were not taken. On one occasion I saw a 6 months old baby, which was suffering from what the Arab doctor called "green diarrhoea" was given to nurse a milk mixture, boiled water, and strong sweet tea. From my interpreter's home in Sabanga the sick child was taken to the hospital, where it was examined by the doctor, but the mother refused to let it be admitted to hospital. On the days following a nurse came and gave it injections against the stomach trouble diagnosed, and gave instructions concerning what the child could - and particularly what it could not - eat. But her directions were not followed. As a last measure to keep life in the baby, a woman who was nursing her own child was summoned to nurse that the sick baby could be placed at her breast, and on the last night the baby was also allowed to suck at this woman in whose arms at last it died. My interpreter told me that the mother of the sick baby had also been unable to nurse the previous child, which, at the time I was staying in the home, was three years old. My interpreter had lost her little half-sister also by the help of raw yolks of egg. She was so accustomed to a high infant mortality that a child's life was not considered secured until it began to eat with adults. A proverb therefore was current about the death of infants[1].

As Islam permits no form of birth control, pregnancies are as frequent as the long nursing period permits. In an example, my interpreter's 30 year old mother had been pregnant 12 times, though on several occasions she had been interrupted by natural abortion. She remembered had not their time, for so many of the children had died young that when I visited the home there were only three living, a son of 2½ and two daughters aged 28 (my interpreter) and 23. The other wife, "my father's wife" as my interpreter called her, was 37 and had given birth 12 times. Nine of these offspring were alive: five daughters (18, 17, 15, 12 and 3 years of age) and four sons (13, 6, 5 and 4 months).

Shalkan relates that in some districts in Egypt a husband is not permitted to eat warm white bread with a nursing in order that the child shall not get spots all over its body[2]. After I had read a not very strongly-worded taboo while changing in my interpreter's home, it was declared that the condition of the sick infant had deteriorated because I had been in the same room.

A boy, born, is more desired than a girl, but Muhammad, who abolished the ancient Arab custom of burying new-born female infants alive, does several times in the Quran that male children are more desirable than female[3]. The birth of a girl in Kordofan might cause a husband, subjected to

4: Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

substituted that will provide that deep contentment of soul, the harmony of mind, that I came across in the village women who could neither read nor write?

The boys, even as small as 6–7 years of age, led independent what we should call a street life. Playgrounds were unknown, corresponding to the fact that the attitude there was not that childhood should be passed in play. To give street life its due, it must be remembered that the men, so to say, live in the street, whilst the women and small children occupy the home. At work and at leisure boys and men spent their time outside the home. In consequence the boys obtained a street education among men, and we must return to ancient Greece to discover a parallel[1] showing the positive and negative aspects of this form of education.

The Coran, Sure 4, verse 1, says: "Be careful of your duty towards Allah ..., and towards the wombs (that bore you)". This command is honoured to a high degree on the part of a son. To illustrate the intimate relations between mother and son, I once saw a young Kurd climbing up the steep hill to the small hospital at the Dokan Dam Site with his sick mother on his back, apparently a more comfortable mode of transport for her than a donkey or a mule[2].

MARRIAGE

The limitations in the choice of spouse are found in the Coran[3]. A man cannot marry his own mother (or other of his father's wives), his daughter or granddaughter, his mother's sister, his father's sister, his sister, his brother's daughter, his mother-in-law or step-daughter. But, in addition, a non-marriageable relationship exists not only between blood relations and intermarried persons but also in respect of milk kinship, which is put on a par with blood relationship. As the law at the same time recommends that a spouse be sought within the family, marriage possibilities are cousins and second cousins, that is the descendants of uncles, aunts, grand uncles and grand aunts[4]. Of these marriage possibilities the cousin on the father's side is preferable and then the cousin on the mother's side. The terms in the Kurdish kinship system, purely descriptive indicating the genealogical distance between close relatives[5], are: father's brother's daughter, *amkal*, (ortho-cousin marriage); father's sister's daughter, *pûrzal*, (cross-cousin marriage); mother's brother's daughter, *xâlkal*, (cross-cousin marriage), and mother's sister's daughter, *pûrzal*, (ortho-cousin marriage).

In the homes I stayed in I met in the village upper class the father's brother's daughter wedding which, according to Leach[6] and Barth[7] is that preferred by Kurds. In the shaikh family at Topzawa the wife was the daughter of the father's brother in Sergalu. In Serkan two of the shaikh's three married sons were married to two sisters, both daughters of the father's brother. According to Leach the marriages of village leaders "tend to have political alliances" like the "Royal marriages of medieval Europe"[8]. In my experience this was not so, for the cases I met were the father's brother's daughter choice as common in Islam areas.

It was stated that two families could exchange daughters. Both my interpreter and Shaikh Taiba's brother said that if the desired bride had an elder brother, a bride for him is demanded from the bridegroom's family. When asked, the 18 year old son of the Shaikh of Topzawa said further that a man in his milieu was able to marry anyone he wished. However, I do not think that too much faith

831 684 the bride was punished for not having guarded the honour of the family—not by her injured husband, but by men of her own family—she would be taken to be examined by the woman gynaecologist to discover whether the lacking proofs of virginity were due to some physical irregularity. It was stated that the entire of white cotton material that comprised the actual, detachable, bridal sheet would be kept by the bride's family for a year as proof for the bride's in-laws if any doubt should be raised about the bride's honour. "About a year" means to about the birth of the first child. After that the bride sheet would be washed and included in the household linen.

585 831 In view of the very definite modesty prevalent among Kurds, and the aversion to any display of nakedness, the lack of modesty when it is a matter of first mating is quite unusually surprising. It is a public affair and must therefore be extremely embarrassing for the young woman; equally painful must it be for the young man who is expected immediately to consummate the marriage and then, his garments adjusted, to leave the field to the waiting woman, who roughly dries the bride's genital opening in order to obtain as clear a trace on the sheet as possible. I heard of no case where a married bride had been killed on her wedding morning.

183 562 684 831 Hay[154] states that with the Kurds the law is very strict as regards the honour of women, but it seems to be the honour of married women that is concerned when he says that "a woman ... who misconducts herself, or, who is suspected on reasonable grounds of misconducting herself, must surely die; and the husband, brother or whoever is responsible for her, who fails to put her out of the way, is considered to have lost his honour, and a Kurd's *ahmâr* or honour is one of his most precious possessions". From what I was told it is only the young, unmarried girls whose honour is guarded by such drastic measures.

In regard to the bridal sheet custom, Nikitine[155] says that it was falling into desuetude as early as 1922, remarking that it is "à son déclin, une coutume constraint à mettre sur le lit des nouveaux mariés un linge blanc ("yyrdé"), qu'on renvoie ensuite aux parents de la jeune femme, comme preuve de sa virginité".

585 831 191 The use of the bridal sheet with the Iranian Lurs is mentioned by Feilberg[156]. That the Arabs kill a young woman who does not pass the test, and that this is done by her own male relatives, is referred to by Dickson[157], though he adds that he has heard of one case where "... the man being chivalrous enough to smuggle into the bridal chamber a fresh piece of meat with blood on it, with which to soil the bed linen ...". To this can be put Niebuhr's information about the Arabs as long ago as 1763: that it is seldom that the unfortunate bride suffers, "denn sie wissen Künste"[158].

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595 *Polygamy and divorce.* According to the Coran, provided a man's economic position allows it he may have up to four wives at a time[159], but is obliged to treat them alike and spend an equal amount of time, day and night, with each of them[160].

586 587 The husband has sole right to an immediate dissolution of the marriage by pronouncing *talâq*: "I renounce thee" or, better: "I abandon all right over thee". Until the expiration of the "*idda*-period"[161] the wife cannot contract a new marriage, and during this term she is entitled to maintenance[162]. By *talâq* a man can twice divorce himself from his wife but, should he regret his act, can without further

184 42
233
463 information as to how many individuals go with the cattle or what is their relationship with those that stay behind to get in the harvest.

463 There are few other specialist occupations. Rug making is a specialist accomplishment of some of the women but the quantities • 183 produced are of no economic importance. Other crafts are chiefly in the hands of travelling experts who wander from village to village equipped with the tools of their craft and work up the materials offered to them by their clients. One may name for instance the felt maker, the carpenter, the tinker and the builder. It must be emphasised that these people are not dealers but craftsmen. The felt maker works up the wool provided by the villager; the villager must provide the wool before the carpenter can make a fork for him. The capital of such craftsmen can therefore be very small and the return for their work is little more than their keep and travelling expenses.

Traders

463 Quite distinct from these are the various traders who provide 493 the contact between the village and the outside world. These are best classified by their Kurdish names - miscefrusch, star and bazargan. The miscefrusch are primarily travelling fruit dealers, their trade is of a local nature and entirely on a barter basis. They provide contact as between one part of the tribal area and another. Thus when I was in Walash a dealer arrived with fruit from Rast which he traded for small quantities of wheat and tobacco.

The star may best be described as a travelling pedlar. He deals in such items as matches, needles, cigarette papers, spices, kerosene, thread, sugar, tea and coffee - in fact he fulfils the functions of the general village store. His terms are partly barter and partly cash. He can however only deal in small quantities - an Agha such as Sheikh Mohammad would always send in direct to Rowanduz for his sugar rather than purchase it through an star. Occasionally the star is permanently established in a single village. A shopkeeper of this sort is known as dukandar; among the villages I visited, shops of this sort only existed in the smuggling centre of Khalan.

463 The bazargan maintain permanent shops in the towns such as 493 Rowanduz and Erbil and only send travellers out to the villages. They 462 deal only in the superior categories of goods, - cloth, calico, tea, coffee, sugar, - so that their principal clients are the Aghas. For the most part they are Jews or Armenians. They do not trade for barter but gain their trade by offering elastic terms of credit. It is worth noting that usury seems to be excluded; a debt of £5 incurred today is still a debt of £5 if settled in 3 years time. Presumably to allow for this, the prices are quite exterritonate. The development of this system of credit trading is, I think, quite new for this part of Kurdistan. It seems likely in due course to lead to the bankruptcy

8: Leach E-5 (1938) 1940 MA11 Kurd MA11
Rowanduz

The Positive Contribution

121 • 183 On the other hand on the positive side I have attempted to avoid dry generalisations of the form "the Kurds marry their first cousins". My aim definitely has not been to record the "manners and customs" of the Kurds. Rather I have tried to throw some light on the contrasting factors of conflict and cohesion that affect the lives of the small group of people inhabiting this Rowanduz area. If there is any moral in the story it is to emphasise once again the futility of attaching psychological labels to cultural groups. Again and again the Kurds as a group have been labelled treacherous, bloodthirsty, lazy, virile, stupid and a dozen things besides; this study at least should show that there can be no such easy classification. It is true that the structural pattern of a society does impose upon individuals some standardisation of behaviour, but this structural pattern affects the interests of different individuals in widely different ways and their resulting reactions differ accordingly. There can never be absolute conformity to the cultural norm, indeed the norm itself exists only as a stress of conflicting interests and divergent attitudes. All cultural groups, no matter how stable they appear in the light of history, are within themselves at any given time in a constant state of flux and potential change, the balance is always precarious.

177 121 Thus the changes, often violent and disintegrative, that arise under conditions of Culture Contact differ only in degree and not in kind from smaller incipient changes that take place all the time even when the culture group is functioning under "natural" conditions, however those may be defined. The mechanism of culture change is to be found in the reaction of individuals to their differential economic and political interests. Viewed in this light the problems even of a small and obscure Kurdish tribe may have a wide and general relevance, extending even to the conditions of our own society. The study of processes of change and development is a cardinal problem for sociologists. As an anthropologist I would argue that these processes can best be studied in the microcosmic conditions of a small and relatively isolated group, where the limits of individual interest can be clearly recognised; but the problem is one of general application.

In conclusion, so far as the Kurds are concerned, I will merely express the hope that this analysis is soon put out of date by more intensive research.